

THE GLOBE BEFORE AND AFTER THE ADVENT OF IMAM MAHDI, PART VI¹

MOHAMMAD ALI SHOMALI

ABSTRACT: Earlier articles in this series offered an overview of the sources of both the dominant world religions and Islamic sources on the concept of the 'End of Times' - the world's state of affairs before and after the coming of Imam Mahdi to establish worldwide justice and peace. Using the Qur'an and hadith as sources to visualise the future and increase our knowledge on the advent of Imam Mahdi with the purpose of establishing a positive relationship with him and preparing for his return, the previous parts expanded on the qualities of the people of this time, including their intellectual condition, and scientific and technological advancements, and signs of the moral, cultural, and religious state of affairs before and after his return. This part further delves into the state of affairs after his return, such as establishing universal brotherhood, peace and love.

¹ This paper is based on part twelve of lectures delivered by the author in Muharram 1428/ January 2007 in London. Parts one to ten have been covered in previous issues. Part eleven was delivered on the Day of Ashura about Imam Husayn (a) and remembrance of God and will be published separately.

Brotherhood

One of the achievements at the time of Imam al-Mahdi (aj) is establishment of pure and sincere brotherhood. Of course, this should always exist among believers, but unfortunately this is often not the case. Imam Baqir says:

حتى إذا قام القائم جاءت المزاملة و يأتي الرجل إلى كيس أخيه
فيأخذ حاجته لا يمنعه

When Mahdi comes sincere and strong brotherhood will also arrive and a brother who needs money will put his hand into the pocket of his brother and his brother will not stop him [as if they are the same person].²

In another hadith, a person was with Imam Baqir who asked him:

أبيجي ء أحدكم إلى أخيه فيدخل يده في كيسه فيأخذ حاجته فلا يدفعه

Do you and your brothers have a relationship such that one of you can put his hand into the pocket of his brother and take what he needs, and his brother will not be bothered by it?

The man responded:

مَا أَعْرِفُ ذَلِكَ فِيْنَا

I do not know of such thing among us.

The Imam replied, "Then nothing!" The man asked, "What does that mean? Are we going to be destroyed?" The Imam replied:

² *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 52, Page 372

إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ لَمْ يُعْطُوا أَحْلَامَهُمْ بَعْدَ

Truly these people have not yet reached maturity in their understanding.³

But at the time of Imam al-Mahdi, this brotherhood will become complete.

Love and friendship

At the time of Imam al-Mahdi, there will be no enmity or hostility. Instead, there will be love and friendship:

و لو قد قام قائمنا ... لذهبت الشحناء من قلوب العباد و
اصطلحت السباع و البهائم...

When our Qa'im will come, hostility will leave the hearts of people; even wild and domestic animals will not be enemies of one another. A woman will be able to walk from Iraq to Syria carrying jewellery, and no one will harass or attack her.⁴

This seems strange. If there is no hostility between animals, then what would the carnivorous animals eat? According to some scholars, this is a metaphor to indicate the complete safety to such an extent that even animals will feel safe.

Another way it can be understood is that as wild animals understandably need food, and this is provided when other animals are killed; however, it may be that the provision of food will occur without enmity and greed. In other words, they may be provided with food but

³ *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 2, Page 174

⁴ *Tuhaf ul-Uqul*, Page 115

not more than they require, so this would create a sense of safety. Or perhaps there will be a substitute food for them, without them needing to kill other animals. In any case, the conclusion we can draw from the hadith is that there will be utmost safety.

Other hadiths in this regard affirm that the roads will become very safe and there will be no thieves, terrorists, or any attacks on travellers. For example, one hadiths reads as follows:

وتخرج العجوزة الضعيفة من المشرق تريد المغرب لا يؤذيها احد

An elderly woman will be able to move from east to west, and no one will annoy her.⁵

God has promised this in the Qur'an:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ
الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا
يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا

God has promised those of you who have faith and do righteous deeds that He will surely make them successors in the earth, just as He made those who were before them successors, and He will surely establish for them their religion which He has approved for them, and that He will surely change their state to security after their fear, while they worship Me, not ascribing any partners to Me. (24:55)

⁵ Bihar ul-Anwar, vol. 55, page 355

Spiritual perfection

Generally speaking, human beings find it very difficult to attain spiritual perfection whilst they are afflicted by problems and calamities in their material lives. A person challenged with poverty, injustice, lack of security, enmity, tyrants, and lives in a society that does not facilitate the flourishing of one's talents, then for such a person it would be difficult to progress and uplift spiritually. That is probably why so much emphasis has been placed on the material and worldly aspects of our lives. Of course, there are some outstanding individuals who will – despite their difficulties – maintain their direction and remain steadfast. The Prophet said:

كاد الفقر أن يكون كفرا

Poverty is likely to lead to disbelief.⁶

We have seen real life examples of the poor who easily change their faith, as they are predominantly concerned with feeding themselves and their children.

Imam Mahdi will remove obstacles that preoccupy people, and will thereby give them the opportunity to concentrate on that which is truly important. This is when and why their intellect becomes complete (we referred to this hadith earlier). When these are achieved, people will have a sharp vision and understanding of their responsibilities. It is almost like a heaven; the only difference is that in heaven a person will not have the chance to increase his or her deeds. But in this utopia, one can act, and hence add to their good deeds through worship, fasting,

⁶ *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 2, Page 307

praying, thinking, increasing knowledge, showing love to others, and increasing closeness to God.

Ammar Sabati narrates that he asked Imam Sadiq:

فما تري اذا ان نكون من اصحاب القائم و يظهر الحق، و نحن
اليوم في امامتك و طاعتك افضل اعمالا من اصحاب دوله
الحق و العدل؟

Why should we wish to be one of the companions of the Twelfth Imam at the time of dominance of the truth, whereas we are currently under your guidance and your reign and therefore our actions are considered to be more valuable than the actions of those who live under the reign of governance of the truth and justice?

Imam Sadiq replied:

سبحان الله اما تحبون ان يظهر الله تبارك و تعالي الحق و العدل
في البلاد، و يجمع الله الكلمه، و يولف الله بين قلوب مختلفه، و
لا يعصون الله عز و جل في ارضه، و تقام حدوده في خلقه، و
يرد الله الحق الي اهله، فيظهر حتي لا يستخفي بشيء من الحق
مخافه احد من الخلق؟

Subhan Allah! Do you not wish that God establishes truth and justice in all lands, [and the condition of all the servants of God becomes good, and not just you few believers?] And God then brings unity and makes all people gather around the truth in full agreement with each other, and that He brings reconciliation amongst

hearts that are divided. And that God will not be disobeyed and no sins will take place. And His laws will be implemented. And He will return the right of the rightful whose right has been taken away. And they will be able to declare this without fear to the extent that they would not need to hide anything due to fear of any creation.⁷

In other words, Imam Sadiq is encouraging his companions to think of the bigger picture achieved by Imam al-Mahdi, instead of thinking of their own state of affairs. Imam acknowledges that perhaps for individual believers certain times of history are better than others, where individuals are tested and can shine. But, the overall situation at the time of Imam al-Mahdi will be better for humanity, and believers should be eagerly praying for his advent so that people can achieve more easily higher level of perfection.

Concealing one's faith

Just before the appearance of Imam Mahdi, the true believers will feel the need to exercise taqiyyah, and this will increase once his advent approaches. We should not think that because we are now beginning to establish ourselves as a community we should publicise everything about our faith; we should be well aware of this issue, and should realise that whatever causes misunderstanding or damage to unity should not be highlighted.

Conclusion of the series

We have covered numerous points during this series, including:

⁷ *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 1, Page 333

1. The concept of the end of time, what it means, and how it is referred to in hadiths, i.e. that there are two usages, the end of both of which is the same, but the start of each is different; one begins at the time of *jahiliyyah* and the other begins at the time of *ghaybah*
2. The significance of the end of time
3. The views of different religions, and the fact that they more or less all hold an optimistic view
4. The focus was on a) Islamic teachings from the Qur'an and hadith, and b) the end of time with respect to science, understanding, and communication; culture; morality; and religion.